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SUBJECT: SHARON TO CONGRESSIONAL GROUP: ABBAS MUST ASSURE  
QUIET AND PREVENT TERROR

1. Prime Minister Sharon met for 45 minutes August 22 with an AIPAC-sponsored Republican congressional delegation led by Rep. Roy Blunt. Rep. Blunt began the meeting by congratulating Sharon on the success to date of the disengagement plan, and he asked Sharon to explain Israel's thinking regarding next steps with the Palestinians.

2. Sharon replied that disengagement is important for both Israel and the United States. It is a complicated process, however, in that many of the settlers have been in Gaza for several decades. Sharon said the process of removing the settlements has proceeded faster than had been anticipated.

3. Sharon complained that Palestinian terrorism had not stopped at all during this period. He admitted that it had been quieter, but asserted that Israeli security forces continue to deal with significant terror threats daily.

4. Sharon said that he would like to move forward with the Palestinians but would not do so unless the Palestinians take steps against terrorism. Sharon said that the two parties are now in "the pre-roadmap stage." In order to restart the roadmap, there must be a full cessation of terrorism, violence and incitement; Palestinians must dismantle the terrorist organizations; all illegal weapons must be collected; and Palestinians must undertake the necessary reforms.

5. Sharon continued that terrorism is the main problem and he repeated several times that nothing can move forward unless there is quiet. Sharon said that PA President Abbas had made a mistake in signing an agreement with Hamas in which Abbas committed not to dismantle Hamas or to collect Hamas' weapons. It was also a mistake to agree that Hamas could participate in Palestinian elections. Sharon said that the PA had deployed some forces in the run-up to disengagement but had taken no active steps against terrorism.

6. Sharon said that the PA should come under more pressure to take the necessary steps against terrorism. He opined that the PA might believe that the day will come when Israel will be pressured to give up its demands with respect to terrorism. Sharon promised that this day would not come. He said Israel has faced terrorism for 120 years and that there will be no compromises if terrorism continues. He said that his government is the only one in Israel that has the ability to move forward with the Palestinians; Labor cannot do it and Likud does not want to do it.

7. Asked about Iran, Sharon said that there is no doubt that Iran is undertaking an effort to possess nuclear weapons. He spelled out in detail Iran's continued terror activities, including efforts to recruit Israeli Arabs to participate in terrorism against Israel. He said Iran should be brought to the UN Security Council and put under pressure to abandon its nuclear program. Sharon said he was not persuaded by assessments of possible internal change in Iran; such change could take place, he thought, only if Iran came under heavy pressure.

8. Asked about Israel's request for additional U.S. assistance, Sharon described the significant opportunities for developing agriculture in the Negev and the Galilee. Israel, he said, has already achieved tremendous advances in agriculture but it needs U.S. support. He promised the Congressional representatives that the GOI would provide further information on its assistance request.

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